

THE CLOSURE OF PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE: A MATTER OF COMMON SENSE

• Mr. Pryor. Mr. President, there has been a lot of talk recently, both in Congress and in the media, about reopening the area of Pennsylvania Avenue directly in front of the White House that was closed due to security concerns. Reopening the street to commuter traffic sound good to drivers who are inconvenienced. But before we tear down security structures at any Federal facility we should step back and review recent events in Oklahoma City and New York. The security of Federal buildings has become a serious issue indeed, and when the lives of Americans are threatened we cannot afford to act politically.

About 1 year ago, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, whose department is charged with protecting the President, ordered the Secret Service to close Pennsylvania Avenue to vehicular traffic in front of the White House. His decision was not made precipitously but only after it was called for by the most comprehensive study of White House security in our Nation's history. That study, which was conducted by a body called the White House Security Review, determined that the threat of violent acts against the White House, and other Federal buildings, had grown much more serious over the last decade.

It does not take a big study to tell us that times have changed and that there is a greater threat to Federal buildings such as the White House. The World Trade Center bombing, the Oklahoma City bombing, not to mention the murder near CIA headquarters 10 miles from here, are ample evidence of the threat that domestic terrorism now poses in America.

Mr. President, all of us agree that the White House is the property of the public, that it should be as accessible as reasonable possible. But the White House Security Review clearly found that the threat to public safety from an open Pennsylvania Avenue far outweighed the inconvenience to commuters and sightseers in cars. After much consideration the Review concluded that it was, not able to identify any alternative to prohibiting vehicular traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue that would ensure the protection of the President and others in the White House complex from explosive devices carried in vehicles near the perimeter. These findings were endorsed by its independent bipartisan Advisory Committee, which included former Secretary of Transportation William Coleman and the former Director of the FBI and CIA, Judge William Webster.

According to every authoritative study of the situation, restricting car traffic around the White House is more than reasonable. It is essential.

Many argue that Secretary Rubin's actions have had a negative effect on America's enjoyment of the White House. However, tours have continued

as scheduled, and visitors can now enjoy walking and biking down Pennsylvania Avenue without danger of vehicular traffic. The White House is still the people's house and many would say that enjoyment has been increased by the evolving pedestrian mall.

Perhaps the strongest argument against closure of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House is that it causes traffic problems for city motorists. While it is true that closure of this area has increased an already bad traffic problem, the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and the District of Columbia's Department of Public Works are examining short-term and long-term measures to reduce traffic problems in the city.

Again, inconvenience of drivers around the White House cannot take precedent over the safety of the public who visit the White House, the public servants who work in the White House and, of course, the President and his family. Our Government and society places a high value on human life and I think even the most anxious D.C. driver would not want their zeal to get around town to result in harm to another American.

It is also valuable to note that the creation of a pedestrian mall is consistent with President Washington's vision for the White House, and it is similar to a proposal that President and Mrs. Kennedy endorsed a generation ago.

Mr. President, Americans have long been known for their freedom, but I like to think Americans are also known for their common sense. While I realize that restricting access to any public building is not consistent with America's sense of freedom, I would argue that reopening Pennsylvania Avenue is contrary to our good common sense.

Mr. President, Secretary Rubin made a wise decision a year ago. He used his common sense and decided that closing Pennsylvania Avenue was the right thing to do. Let's not overrule his good judgment or jeopardize the people's house by reopening Pennsylvania Avenue.●

RECOGNITION OF CHISHOLM TRAIL ROUNDUP, FORT WORTH, TX

• Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, more than a hundred years ago, cattle drives made their way across the Texas plains toward the railhead of Abilene, KS, along what came to be known as the Chisholm Trail. Within a span of only two decades, the Chisholm Trail not only transformed settlements and towns, like Ft. Worth, into major centers of commerce, it also produced one of our Nation's most enduring folk heroes—the cowboy.

Since 1976, the Chisholm Trail Roundup has been held in the historic Stockyards District of Fort Worth, TX. The Roundup celebrates the Western spirit of adventure and perseverance and honors the cultures of tribe and

Nation that forged a new way of life on the American frontier. From native American dances to cowboy gunfights, the roundup displays all aspects of frontier life and creates an atmosphere in which learning about our history and enjoying the festival come together.

As one of the country's largest annual festivals, the Chisholm Trail Roundup is nonprofit and benefits Western heritage organizations. For 3 days in June, Fort Worthians will gather once again to celebrate the city's rich heritage and to relive one of the most memorable times in American history.

As a Senator from the State of Texas, I would like to recognize the Chisholm Trail Roundup and its efforts to remind us of our pioneering heritage. I appreciate the thousands of hours of work that have gone into planning this year's event, and I am looking forward to many more roundups in the years to come.●

LARGE BINOCULAR TELESCOPE ON MT. GRAHAM IN ARIZONA

• Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I rise to express my serious concern with language contained in the final fiscal year 1996 appropriations measure which addressed the construction of the Large Binocular Telescope on Mr. Graham in Arizona, which is a sacred place to the Apache Nation and home to the endangered Mt. Graham red squirrel. The Apache tribal and religious leaders have urged the Congress and the administration to protect their historic holy land. They are joined by national Native organizations and by a broad cross-section of the religious and environmental communities internationally. I am also troubled that because there has been no hearing in the Congress on this matter, the Apaches have not been afforded an opportunity to be heard on this important matter of religious freedom.

It is my understanding that the administration has stated its position that construction should not proceed until and unless there is full compliance with standard environmental and cultural reviews. This position is consistent with the recent ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and it would appear that the language addressing Mt. Graham telescope contained in the appropriations Act is not contrary to this position. I can only assume that the administration and many of my colleagues who have concerns both for the environment as well as Native American rights have not insisted on the removal of this language because they also read it as allowing for the customary environmental and cultural reviews to be completed before construction on the telescope is allowed to proceed.●